

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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Medicare Part D Enrollment Event Scheduled in Grand Island

Counselors from the Nebraska Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) will be at College Park in Grand Island on Wednesday, March 8, 2006, to assist area beneficiaries with their Medicare Part D options and enrollment. This free enrollment event will be held from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Appointments are required, and may be made by calling SHIIP at 1-800-234-7119.

New Medicare prescription drug plans became available to everyone with Medicare on January 1, 2006. Representing the biggest change in Medicare's 40-year history, the initial enrollment period for this voluntary program continues through May 15, 2006. Beneficiaries who wait until after May 15th, and do not have drug coverage that is as good as or better than Medicare's, will pay a penalty if they decide to enroll later.

"Everyone with Medicare must make a decision about the new prescription drug benefit," said Jina Ragland, Senior Program Coordinator. "SHIIP is available to help during this confusing time for beneficiaries."

According to data released last month by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, there are approximately 260,000 Medicare beneficiaries in Nebraska. Less than 110,000 of those have prescription drug coverage.

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The Nebraska Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) is part of a national network, funded by a grant from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, that offers unbiased counseling and educational services designed to help senior citizens and those with disabilities make informed decisions on topics related to health insurance. With over 300 volunteers across the state, the Nebraska SHIIP is coordinated within the Nebraska Department of Insurance.